

# Electronic Picture Books – Stop Reinventing the Wheel

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## ABC Project

Practitioners and parents have been duplicating each other's efforts for many years. How can we pool our resources to make literature available to early readers with disabilities? The ABC Project is a group of volunteers who are converting the books available on the Accessible Book Collection to a switch accessible format for children with low-incidence disabilities.

If you own IntelliTools Classroom Suite or Clicker 5 and know how to use it

- Volunteer to convert books from html format to a switch-accessible format
- Your converted books will be made available to all subscribers of the Accessible Book Collection
- See [accessiblebookcollection.wikispaces.com](http://accessiblebookcollection.wikispaces.com) for more information.
- Email Linda Bastiani Wilson ([wilson.lindab@gmail.com](mailto:wilson.lindab@gmail.com)) or Joe Rickerson ([joe@accessiblebookcollection.com](mailto:joe@accessiblebookcollection.com)) to get started.

## Resources

Accessible Book Collection

([www.accessiblebookcollection.org](http://www.accessiblebookcollection.org))

ABC Project Wiki

(<http://accessiblebookcollection.wikispaces.com/>)

- ◆ Electronic Book templates for Clicker 5 and IntelliTools Classroom Suite
- ◆ Rationale for design features of electronic books
- ◆ Ability to join a group effort to convert books on the Accessible Book Collection into a switch-accessible format

# Universal Design for Learning and Digital Picture Books

Following is a rationale for creating e-books with features to support young children with disabilities. While there are many formats for creating e-picture-books using a variety of authoring tools (Power Point, Classroom Suite, Clicker, My Own Bookshelf, and others), many of these books are still inaccessible to children with physical and visual disabilities. In keeping with the philosophy of universal design for learning, these criteria are suggested as a way to make e-picture-books accessible to all children.

## **1) Provide alternative access to the book reading experience**

This includes a way for young children with physical disabilities to exercise as much independence as possible by mimicking the book handling experiences that typical children would have: choose a book, turn pages, go backwards, read, reread, see the text on the same page as the picture, point (virtually).

Built-in switch accessibility (either through auto scan or step scan) to:

- Turn page forward
- Turn page backward
- Read text with word-by-word highlighting
- The option to choose a book from the shelf

## **2) Use formatting to support individuals with visual impairments**

Many children with physical disabilities get reduced visual enjoyment from books, either because of reduced visual acuity, characteristics associated with cortical visual impairment, or because their motor skills affect their ability to turn their head and eyes easily to focus on a book. Online books that are well designed provide a static location for the visual input (the book doesn't move with the hands of the person holding it). In addition, students with CVI (cortical vision impairment) may not be able to focus on auditory and visual stimuli at the same time, so the child should be able to control any animation or auditory output.

Features of an e-book designed to support students with vision issues are:

- Use of original picture book art on a high contrast background
- Text located in the same place on every page as much as possible
- Text in high contrast colors
- Navigation buttons with an auditory scan option so that the student can focus visually on the pictures and text
- Animations and auditory output controlled by the student

## **Rationale for Using Clicker 5 and IntelliTools software as an Easy Reader Format**

Clicker 5 and IntelliTools formats were chosen because it is presumed that many subscribers who would benefit from the features listed were most likely have access to one or both of these programs.